

BETRAYED:

A DARK MARRIAGE MORN.

A Romance of Love, Intrigue and Crime.

BY MRS. ALICE P. GARRIS.

CHAPTER XXXI.—(Continued.)

For an instant his eyes rested on Eugene with a stupefied surprise and almost incredulity; then he raised his arms over his head, and his two hands struck together with a sharp sound. At this terrible moment Cora seized the arm of Eugene, and threw him a look so profound, supplicating and tragic that it alarmed him.

He roughly pushed her from him, crossed his arms, and waited the result. The Senator walked slowly toward him. All at once his face became inflamed with a purple color, his lips half opened as if about to deliver some deadly insult.

He advanced rapidly, his hands raised; but after a few steps the old man suddenly stopped, beat the air with both hands, as if seeking some support, then staggered and fell forward, striking his head against the marble mantelpiece, rolled on the carpet and remained motionless.

Then there ensued in this chamber a sinister silence.

A stifled cry from Eugene broke it. At the same time he threw himself on his knees by the side of the motionless old man, touched first his hand, then his head.

He saw that he was dead. A thin thread of blood trickled down his pale forehead where it had struck the marble; but this was only a slight wound. It would not matter what kind of wound it was, if it killed him. What had killed him was the treachery of those two beings whom he had loved, and who, he believed, loved him. His heart had been broken by the violence of the surprise, the grief and the horror.

One look Eugene told Cora Elliston she was a widow. She threw herself on the divan, buried her face in the cushions and sobbed aloud. Eugene stood still, his back against the mantelpiece, his eyes fixed, wrapped in his own thoughts.

He wished in all sincerity of heart that he could have awakened the dead and restored him to life.

He had sworn to deliver himself up to him without defense if ever the old man demanded it of him for forgotten favors, betrayed friendship and violated honor. Now he had killed him. If he had not slain him with his own hand, the crime was still there in its most hideous form. He saw it before him, he smelt its odor, he breathed its blood.

An uneasy glance of Cora recalled him to himself, and he approached her. They then conversed together in whispers, and he had explained to her the line of conduct she should adopt.

She must summon the servants, say the Senator was taken suddenly ill, and that on entering her room he had been seized by an apoplectic stroke.

It was with some effort she understood she was to wait long enough before giving the alarm to give Eugene sufficient time to escape, and until then she was to remain in this frightful tete-a-tete alone with the dead.

He pitied her, and decided on leaving the house by passing through his uncle's rooms.

Cora immediately rang violently, and Eugene did not retire till he heard the sound of hastening feet on the stairs.

The apartment of the Senator communicated with that of his wife by a short passage. There was a suite of apartments—first a study, then a sleeping-room. Eugene traversed this room with feelings we shall not attempt to describe, and at last gained the street.

The surgeon testified that Senator Sherwood Elliston had died from the rupture of a vessel in the heart.

Two days after the interment in Greenwood took place, at which Eugene Cleveland attended.

The same evening he left New York to join his wife, who had gone to Roxbury the preceding week.

CHAPTER XXXII.

TREMBLING IN THE BALANCE—JEALOUSY.

One of the sweetest sensations in the world is that of a man who has just escaped the fantastic terrors of nightmare, and who, awaking, his forehead bathed with icy sweat, says to himself: "It was but a dream!"

This was, in some degree, the impression which Eugene felt on awaking the morning after he arrived at Roxbury, when his first glance fell on the sunlight streaming over the foliage, and when he heard beneath his window the joyous laugh of his little child.

He, however, was not dreaming; but his soul, crushed by the horrible tension of recent emotions, had a moment's respite, and drank in, almost without alloy, the new calm that surrounded him.

He hastily dressed himself and, descending to the garden, raised his son in his arms.

He embraced him with unusual tenderness, and bending over him spoke to him in a low voice, and asked after his mother, about his plays, with a singularly soft and sad manner. Then he put him down, and walked away, a slow step, breathing the fresh morning air, examining the leaves and the flowers with extraordinary interest.

From time to time a deep, sad sigh broke from his oppressed bosom; he passed his hand over his brow as if to efface the importunate images. He sat down among the luxuriant verdure, called to the nurse to bring his son again to him, held him on his knee, interrogating him again, in a low tone, as he had already done, then drew him toward him, and clasped him tightly for a long time, as though to draw into his own soul the innocence and peace of the child's heart.

Flora surprised him in this gush of feeling, and remained mute with astonishment. He rose immediately and took her hand.

"What splendid care you take of him!" he said. "I thank you for it. He will be worthy of you and your mother."

She was so surprised at the soft and sad tone of his voice that she replied, stammering with embarrassment:

"And worthy of you also, I hope."

"Of me!" said Eugene, whose lips were slightly tremulous. "Poor child, I hope not!" and rapidly withdrew.

Flora and her mother had learned, the previous morning of the death of the Senator. The evening of Eugene's arrival they did not speak to him on the subject, and were cautious not to make any allusion to it. The next day and the succeeding ones, they practiced the same reserve, though very far from suspecting the fatal circumstances which rendered

this souvenir so painful to Eugene. They thought it only natural he should be pained at so sudden a catastrophe, and that his conscience should be disturbed; but they were astonished when this impression prolonged itself from day to day, until it took the appearance of a lasting sentiment.

They began to believe that there had arisen between Cora and himself, probably occasioned by the Senator's death, some quarrel which had weakened the tie between them.

A trip to New York, which he made some two weeks after his arrival, was to them a confirmation of the truth they before suspected, but his prompt return, his new tastes, which kept him at Roxbury for some time, seemed to them favorable impressions.

He was singularly sad and pensive. He took long walks alone. Sometimes he carried his little son with him, as though by chance. He sometimes attempted a little timid tenderness with his wife; and this awkwardness on his part was quite touching.

"Flo," he said to her one day, "you are a fairy, wave your wand over this place and take of it an island in mid-ocean."

"You say that because you know how to swim," she rejoined, laughing and shaking her head; but the heart of the young woman was joyful.

"You embrace me now every moment, my dear child," said her mother to her. "Is this really all intended for me?"

"My beloved mother," while embracing her again—"I assure you he is really courting me again. Why, I am ignorant; but he is courting me and you also, my mother. Notice it."

She did not notice it. In his conversation with her, Eugene seemed to wish to link all that was good in the past with his new life: to forget the rest, and pray of them to forget it also.

It was not without fear that these two charming women abandoned themselves to their hopes. They remembered that they were in the presence of an uncertain person; they little trusted a change so sudden, the reason of which they could not comprehend. They feared it was some passing caprice, which would return to them, if they were its dupes, all their misfortunes, without the dignity which had hitherto attended them.

They were not the only ones struck by this transformation. Mr. Norton and all his friends noticed it. Even the inanimate things—the woods, the trees, the heavens—should have borne the same testimony, for he looked at and studied them with a benevolent curiosity with which he had never before troubled them.

In truth, a profound trouble had invaded him and would not leave him. More than before this epoch, his soul, his philosophy, his pride, had received a rude shock, but he had no less pursued his path, rising after every blow, like a lion wounded, but unconquered.

In trampling under his feet all moral belief which binds the vulgar, he had reserved honor like an inviolable limit. Then, under the empire of his passion, he said to himself that, after all, honor, like all the rest, was conventional. Then he encountered crime—he touched it with his hand—horror seized him, and he recoiled.

He repulsed with disgust the principle which he had conducted him there—asked himself what would become of human society if it had no other.

The simple truths which he had misunderstood now appeared to him in their tranquil splendor. He did not yet distinguish clearly; he did not try to change them, but he plunged with secret delight into their shadows and their peace. He asked for them in the pure heart of his child, in the pure love of his young wife, in the daily miracles of nature, in the harmonies of the heavens, in the calm of the earth—in the depths of his thoughts—of God.

In the midst of this approach toward a new life he hesitated.

Cora Elliston was there.

He loved her yet vaguely. Above all, he would not abandon her without a kind of baseness.

Terrible struggles agitated him. After having done so much evil, would it be permitted him to do good and gracefully partake of the joys he foresaw?

Then, in the past, his fortune acquired through his uncle, his fatal mistress—the specter of that old man—would they permit it?

And we may add, would Providence suffer it? Not that we would wish lightly to use, as is often done, this word Providence, and to suspend over Eugene Cleveland this menace of supernatural chastity.

Providence does not intervene in human events except through the logic of her eternal laws. She has only the sanction of these laws, and it is for this reason she is feared.

At the end of the month Eugene returned to New York and to his counting-room.

Business over for the day, before returning home, he paid a visit to Cora.

He had neglected her a little late; in fact, had only visited her at long intervals, as politeness compelled him.

Cora wished to keep him for dinner, as she had no guests with her. She pressed him so warmly that, blaming himself all the time, he consented. He never saw her without pain.

She always brought back to him those terrible memories, but also that terrible intoxication.

She was never more beautiful. Her deep mourning embellished yet more her languishing and regal grace; it made her pale complexion yet more fair, and it brightened the brilliancy of her look.

She had the air of a tragic queen, or of an allegory of night.

In the evening an hour arrived when the reserve, which for some time had marked their relations, was forgotten. Eugene found himself as in olden times, at the foot of Cora's eyes in hers, and covering with kisses her lovely hands.

She was strange that evening. She looked at him with a wild tenderness, instilling, at pleasure, into his veins the poison of burning passion; then, ceasing him, the tears gathered in her eyes.

All at once, by one of those magical movements of hers, she enveloped with her hands the head of her lover, and spoke to him quite low beneath the shadow of this perfumed veil.

"We might be so happy," she said. "Are we not?" asked Eugene.

"No! I, at least, am not, for you are not all mine, as I am yours. This appears harder now than I am free. If you had remained free—when I think of it or, if you could become so, it would be heaven!"

"You know that I am not so! Why speak of it?"

She drew nearer to him, and with her breath more than her voice, answered:

"Is it possible! Tell me."

"How?" he demanded.

She did not reply, but her fixed look, caressing and cruel, answered him.

"Speak, then, I beg of you!" murmured Eugene.

"Have you not told me—I have not forgotten it—that we are united by ties stronger than all others; that the world and its laws exist no longer for us; that there is no other good, no other bad for us, but our happiness or our unhappiness?"

Well, we are not happy, and if we could be so—listen, I have thought well over it!"

He laid his hand on the cheek of her lover, and the murmur of her last words was lost in her kisses.

Eugene roughly repulsed her, sprang up, and stood before her.

"Cora," he said, sternly, "this is a trick. I hope; but trial or no, never repeat it, never. Remember!"

She also quickly drew up her figure. "Ah! how you love her!" she cried. "Yes, you love her; it is she you love—I know it, I feel it, and I—I am only the wretched object of your pity or of your caprice. Even Mildred Lester is no longer remembered. Very well; go back to her—go and protect her, for I swear to you she is in peril!"

He smiled with his haughty irony. "Let us see your plot," he said. "So you intend to kill her?"

"If I can!" she said; and her superb arm was stretched out as though to seize a weapon.

"What! with your hand?"

"The hand shall be found."

"You are so beautiful at this moment," said Eugene, "I am dying with the desire to fall at your feet. Acknowledge only that you wished to try me, or that you were mad for a moment."

"She gave a savage smile. 'Oh! you dear do you!' she said, coldly; then raising again her voice, which assumed a malignant tone, 'you are right; I am not mad; I did not wish to try you; I am jealous—I am betrayed, and I shall revenge myself, no matter what it costs me, for I care for nothing more in this world than to guard her.'"

"Be it so," said Eugene, with flashing eyes. He immediately left the room and the house; he reached the Grand Central Depot on foot, and that night reached Roxbury.

Something terrible there awaited him.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

DESPAIR.

Oscar Sylve had been making the most of his time, though thus far matters had not turned out as he had expected or desired.

Baffled in bringing about Eugene's ruin through the Senator, he determined to separate him from Flora, whom, notwithstanding what had happened, he still loved as much as ever.

He dare not go to her himself, but while in the service of the Senator and Warren Leland he had become acquainted with a connection of the Leland family, a sour-minded old maid, who affected religion and all the virtues, and professed to despise wealth and the pleasures of this world, and who, as a matter of course, hated her younger, prettier, and more fortunate relative, Flo, and all her family with an intense and perfect hatred.

Oscar Sylve knew and understood this woman thoroughly, and determined to make her his tool.

He went to her, told his story—a fearful story it was—and when he saw she was almost bursting with the information she had received, suggested that she should go to Roxbury and pay the Leland family a visit, and that he would know, Eugene Cleveland was out of the way.

She jumped at the idea, and the very next eastern-bound train had her on board as a passenger.

It is almost needless to say that Mrs. Leland and Flora were greatly astonished when informed that their connection, Miss Phebe Craven, had arrived to pay them a visit. They could not understand it. Their intercourse with her had always been very constrained. Neither could they understand her religion coincided with hers.

After a moment's reflection Mrs. Leland said: "Of course we must receive her and treat her well. You go down, Flo, and tell her to come in. I will come and relieve you."

"Very well, mamma," and with a resigned sigh Flo descended to the reception-room.

At sight of her Miss Phebe started to her feet, and rushing forward, threw her arms about her neck and kissed her. Flo, however, did not return this greeting quite so cordially.

In truth, she had no great aversion for her maiden relative; she simply contented herself with not liking her; Miss Phebe Craven hated Flo intensely, and now she had found a good occasion to prove it to her, and she would not lose it. What wonder, then, she began with a kiss?

The death of the Senator had destroyed all Sylve's high hopes of the fortune which he believed he would receive for opening the eyes of the deluded old man, and in his rage and disappointment he had been very bitter against Eugene. Phebe learned through him that Eugene had been in the chamber of Mrs. Elliston the night of the Senator's death. On this foundation of fact she drew a conclusion to frame the most odious suspicions; and Sylve, baffled in his vengeance, and like her in his envy, had aided her.

On Flora's invitation, she again took her seat, but forced her young relative into a chair by her side, and still held her hand.

Soon she effected to make the Senator's death the theme of conversation—shed a few tears over her old acquaintance, and kissed Flo's imprisoned hand with a burst of tenderness.

"My poor little thing!" she said to her; "it is for you alone I weep, for you will be yet more unhappy than heretofore, if that can be possible."

"I do not understand you, Phebe," answered Flora, coldly.

"If you do not understand me so much the better," replied Miss Phebe, with a shade of bitterness. Then, after a moment's pause: "Listen my dear little thing! this is a duty of conscience which I comply with. You see, an honest creature like you merits a better fate; and your mother, who is in a dupe, this man would deceive the Almighty himself. In the name of humanity, I feel bound to ask pardon for both of them."

"I repeat, Phebe, that I do not understand you."

"But it is impossible, Flo! Come, it is impossible that all this time you have suspected nothing."

"I suspect nothing, Phebe Craven," Flora, "because I know all."

"Ah! continued Phebe, dryly, 'if this be so, I have nothing to say.' But there are persons, in that case, who accommodate their conscience to very strange things."

"That is what I thought a moment since, Miss Craven," said Flora, rising abruptly.

"As you wish, my dear; but I speak in your own interest, and I shall reproach myself for not having spoken to you more clearly. I know your husband better than you will ever know him; and the other also. Notwithstanding you say so, you do not know him, let me tell you. Senator Elliston died very suddenly, and after it is your turn! Be very careful, my poor child!"

"Oh, Phebe Craven!" cried poor Flora, becoming ghastly pale, "I will never see you again while I live!"

She left the room on the instant, ran up stairs, and found her mother.

She repeated to her the terrible words she had just heard, and her mother tried to calm her; but she herself was disturbed.

She went down to Miss Phebe, and

supplanted her to have pity on them and to retract the abominable innuendo she had thrown out, or to explain it more fully, she made it so plain and clear that she would inform Mr. Cleveland of the affair in case of need, and that he would make it unpleasant for her.

Terrified in her turn, Miss Phebe judged the best method was to destroy Eugene Cleveland in the estimation of Mrs. Leland.

She related all that had been told her by Sylve. She informed her of the presence of Eugene at the Senator's house the night of his death. She hinted at certain reports that were circulated, and mingling calumny with truth, redoubling at the same time her affection, her caresses and her tears, she succeeded in giving Mrs. Leland such an estimate of Eugene's character that there were no suspicions or apprehensions which the poor woman from that moment did not consider legitimate as connected with him.

Miss Craven finally offered to send Sylve to her, that she might herself interrogate him. Mrs. Leland, affecting an incredulity and a tranquillity that she did not feel, refused, and shortly after the mischief-making old maid returned to the city.

On rejoining her daughter, Mrs. Leland exerted herself to deceive her, as to the impressions she had received, but she did not succeed; for her anxious face belied her reassuring words.

Accustomed so long to think, feel, and suffer together, these two women now met, so to speak, in the same reflections, the same reasonings, and the same terror that they would in their memories all the incidents of Cleveland's life—all his faults; and under the shadow of the monstrous action imputed to him, his faults took a criminal character which they were surprised they had not seen before.

They discovered a series and a sequence in his designs, all of which were imputed to him as crimes—even his good actions. Thus his conduct of late, his strange ways, his fancy for his child and for his wife, his assiduous tenderness toward her, was nothing more than the hypocritical meditation of a new crime—a mask which he was preparing in advance.

What was to be done? What kind of a life was it possible to live in common under the weight of such thoughts? What present or future?

These thoughts bewildered them.

Next day Eugene could not fail remarking the singular change in their countenances in his presence; but he thought they had suspected he had been to call on Cora, and were offended.

He smiled at this, for as a result of his reflections during the night he had determined to break off forever his intrigue with Cora Elliston.

For this rupture, which he had made it a point of honor not to provoke, Cora had herself furnished him a sufficient pretext. The criminal thought she had confided to him, he knew, only a faint test to him, but it was enough to justify his abandonment of her. As to the violent and menacing words she had used, he held them of little value, though at times she would remind him of the trouble he had given her.

Nevertheless, for a long time he had not felt his heart so light.

This wicked thought, it seemed as though he had resumed, with his liberty, his youth and virtue.

He would not speak a part of the day with his child. Just as night fell, clear and pure, he proposed to Flora an excursion in the woods. He spoke to her of a view which had struck him shortly before on such a night, and which would please, he said, her romantic taste.

He would not permit himself to be surprised at the divine illusion she manifested, the disquietude which her face indicated, or at the rapid glance she exchanged with her mother.

The same thought, and that a most fearful one, entered the mind of both these unfortunate women at the same moment of time.

They were still under the impression of the shock which had so weakened their nerves, and Eugene's sudden proposition, so contrary to his usual habits, the hour—the night and the solitary walk—had suddenly awakened in their brains the sinister images which Phebe Craven had laid there.

Flora, however, with an air of resolution the circumstances did not seem to demand, and prepared immediately to go out, then followed her husband from the house, leaving her child in charge of her mother.

They had only to cross the garden to find themselves on the edge of the woods which almost reached the dwelling, and which stretched to some distance beyond.

Eugene's intention in seeking this interview was to confide to his wife the decisive determination he had taken of delivering up to her, absolutely and without reserve, his heart and life, and to enjoy with her his last taste of true happiness.

Surprised at the cool distraction with which Flo replied to the affectionate geyety of his language, he redoubled his efforts to bring their conversation to a tone of more intimacy and confidence.

While stopping at intervals to point out to her some effects of light and shadow in their walk, he asked what visitor she had seen yesterday. She named two or three; then lowering her voice against her will mentioned Phebe Craven.

"That one," said Eugene, "you had better not have seen. I no longer recognize her."

"Why?" asked she, timidly.

"Because she is a bad woman. When we are a little more intimate with each other, you and I, I shall edify you on her character. I shall tell you all—understand?"

There was so much of goodness in the accent with which he pronounced these words that Flo felt her heart half comforted.

The phantom disappeared, little by little, from her mind, and she continued to say to herself that she had been the sport of a bad dream and of a true madness, when a singular change in her husband's face renewed all her terrors.

Eugene, in his turn, had become absent and visibly preoccupied with some train of thought, and he made an effort, made half repulse, meditated, then stopped quickly to look around him, like a frightened child.

There was an extraordinary similarity in the thoughts which occupied them both. Both trembled when Flo was trembling for fear near her husband, and he was trembling for her.

He thought they were being followed; he thought he heard in the thicket the cracking of branches, rattling of the leaves, and finally the sound of stealthy steps.

These noises always ceased on his stopping, and then commenced again the moment he resumed his walk. He thought, a moment later, he saw the shadow of a man pass rapidly among the underbrush behind them.

Finally he had no doubt that they were being followed.

The repeated menace of Cora Elliston against Flora's life—the passionate and unbridled character of this woman, soon presented itself to his mind, and suggested this mysterious pursuit, and awakened these frightful suspicions.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

FASHIONS OF THE DAY.

WRAPS FOR THE FRESH OCTOBER DAYS.

Styles in Cloaks, Mantles, Costumes, Hats, Bonnets, Gloves, Etc.—The Mode Antiquated. Fichu Remains the Favorite. Charming Combinations of Cloth and Silk.

NEW YORK, September, 1890.

SEPTEMBER may be properly termed the "transition month," so far as fashions are concerned. The warm days and cool evenings give rise to a sort of irrespressible conflict. As was to be expected, at the end it is the thin and vapory tissues which are worsted (no pun intended), and the demi-saison fabrics which carry the day. In fashion, as in politics, ethics and economics, each season has its particular fad, which it pets and coddles till we get provoked at the strong centrifugal tendency of the human mind. For instance, spring seems to encourage church people to meet in religious convocation, while summer has an excitant effect on social scientists. Autumn gives rise to increased activity in the minds of political reformers, and winter, with its beer, has a disturbing influence on the minds of socialists, nihilists, communists and anarchists. In the world of fashion the soul of the dying year turns to the contemplation of jackets and wraps. Nature never neglects her own, and woman is nature's favorite. Man has become too much of a mental machine to interest nature any more. You can tell exactly how a man is going to act, given, of course, the surrounding circumstances. Not so with dear woman; she still remains the same grown-up child, crying for an emerald velvet dress with a waist opening on a cascade of old lace when her husband hasn't two thousand a year!

In the autumn nature gives the animal a thicker fleece, and she turns woman's thoughts to some sort of covering for her shoulders. Hence, in the almanac of fashion read: "About this time look for a fine display of jackets and wraps in assorted colors to suit the costume." And, speaking of modish coverings for the shoulders, I should say a word about the stylish *mantelet* which promises to be such a favorite. It is a combination garment consisting usually of cloth and silk, although plush will also be used in a color harmonizing with the dress. The *mantelet* is made up of a cloth cape, tucked at the edge, coming to a point at the waist and furnished with a Medicean collar. A very large capuchon consisting of two rows of pongee silk, commencing at a point on the back edge of the cape, are carried over the shoulders and down the front, the top flounce cascading nearly to the knees. The capuchon has a V-shaped plastron and pointed yoke, both of which should be properly embroidered. Increased elegance is obtained by making the pointed

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